



Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony  
Special Appropriation #23-27: Food Staples Program, \$8,150,000

October 25, 2022

The Community Action Board strongly supports the proposed Special Appropriation for the Food Staples Program. This funding will provide critical support to local organizations that are working to reduce food insecurity in our community. Manna Food Center, a Community Action Agency partner, along with the Capital Area Food Bank, will use this additional funding to increase food distribution at over 70 organizations, allowing these organizations to provide additional healthy food options to residents.

As the governing body for the Community Action Agency, our board is well aware of the needs in our community. Community Action staff participate in the Food Council and the agency oversees contracts for Manna Food Center, Women Who Care Ministries, and Kids in Need Distributors. We know that these organizations saw significant increases in demand for food assistance during the pandemic and that the needs remain. In Montgomery County, about 8.6% of residents are food insecure.<sup>1</sup> It is also important to note that the very high cost of living in the County and the substantial increases in the cost of groceries contribute to this serious issue. For example, the 2022 Self-Sufficiency Standard for a household with one adult, one infant, and a preschooler is an astounding \$127,589. This includes \$687 for monthly food costs, on top of \$3,335 for child care and \$1,873 for housing.<sup>2</sup> For families who are struggling to cover their basic costs and achieve self-sufficiency, food assistance from the organizations included in this appropriation can make a substantial difference, especially since these organizations work in communities with the highest needs, including immigrant communities and communities of color.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/>

In addition to reviewing the statistics on this important issue, our board has heard directly from participants in our advocacy training program, the Community Advocacy Institute, who have been personally impacted by food insecurity. Over the years, participants have shared their stories about SNAP benefits being unexpectedly cut off or the lack of healthy food options available in their communities. These personal experiences reflect the day-to-day impacts of food insecurity on households here in Montgomery County. Appropriations like this one can make a big impact and are an indication of the County's ongoing commitment to reducing food insecurity.

The Community Action Board greatly appreciates the Council's work on this issue. We look forward to working with the Council to continue to support policies and funding that reduce food insecurity and increase access to healthy food options.